

Dear Beloved,

This week's gospel talks about taking on Jesus' yoke and living our lives in such a way that we are reflecting Jesus, in everything we do.

This is David and Ruth Fletcher's last Sunday in the parish, the last time Ruth will play for us and we will be celebrating all they have meant to us at Morning Tea in the Hall after the service, please come to St Paul's if you can.



Blessings

Wendy

On 30th June At 2.00 pm in the Hall there will be a concert featuring local talent.

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Steve Clark will do his next session on Saturday 5th August at 2.30 pm
and then 2nd September

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Wendy's last Sunday in the Parish 24th September

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Morning Tea after the Service every 2nd and 4th Sunday
please volunteer for the roster.

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Midweek Services
every Wednesday at 9.30 all Welcome

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Please volunteer for the roster, well in advance.

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PTO →

Prayer and Praise

Wendy

Catherine

Edith and Colin Mayhew

--

Glenn Fletcher

Alan Hood

our wardens and Parish Councillors

--

Bernie and Gayle

Scott's wife Jennie.

--

Beryl Lucas Mary Mitchell's sister in Palliative Care (Cancer)

Beattie Russell and Jenni Roberts in Yallambie.

--

Liz Pirie

Leanne Lowery

Mary Mitchell

--

Peter & Julie Harris from Bredbo

all congregations in Numeralla

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The Catholic priest Father Mark Croker
as he ministers from Bombala through to the mountains

--

for each other that we may be salt and light in this community

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People everywhere who are living through war or disasters of every kind.

9 July 2023 2.5

Hymn TIS 585 I heard the voice of Jesus say

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
And also with you.

Sentence

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest,' says the Lord.
'Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart.' Matthew 11.28–29

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and
worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen**

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ has taught us
that what we do for the least of his brothers and sisters we do also for him:
give us the will to serve others as he was the servant of all, who gave up his life and died for us;
yet lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Genesis 24.34–38, 42–49, 58–67

³⁴ So he said, 'I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵ The Lord has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. ³⁶ My master's wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. ³⁷ And my master made me swear an oath, and said, "You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, ³⁸ but go to my father's family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son."

⁴² 'When I came to the spring today, I said, " Lord , God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come. ⁴³ See, I am standing beside this spring. If a young woman comes out to draw water and I say to her, 'Please let me drink a little water from your jar,' ⁴⁴ and if she says to me, 'Drink, and I'll draw water for your camels too,' let her be the one the Lord has chosen for my master's son." ⁴⁵ 'Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out, with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, "Please give me a drink."

⁴⁶ 'She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, "Drink, and I'll water your camels too." So I drank, and she watered the camels also. ⁴⁷ 'I asked her, "Whose daughter are you?" 'She said, "The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milkah bore to him." 'Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, ⁴⁸ and I bowed down and worshipped the Lord . I praised the Lord , the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son. ⁴⁹ Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn.'

⁵⁸ So they called Rebekah and asked her, 'Will you go with this man?' 'I will go,' she said. ⁵⁹ So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way, along with her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, 'Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the cities of their enemies.' ⁶¹ Then Rebekah and her attendants got ready and mounted the camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

⁶² Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. ⁶³ He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. ⁶⁴ Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel ⁶⁵ and asked the servant, 'Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?' 'He is my master,' the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself. ⁶⁶ Then the servant told Isaac all he had done.

⁶⁷ Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Psalm 45.10-17

¹⁰ Hear, O daughter, consider and incline your ear: forget your own people and your father's house.

¹¹ **The king desires your beauty: he is your lord, therefore bow down before him.**

¹² The richest among the people, O daughter of Tyre: shall entreat your favour with gifts.

¹³ **The king's daughter is all glorious within:**

her clothing is embroidered cloth-of-gold.

¹⁴ In robes of many colours she is led to you, O king:

and, after her, the virgins that are with her.

¹⁵ **They are led with gladness and rejoicing: they enter the palace of the king.**

¹⁶ In place of your fathers you shall have sons: and make them princes over all the land.

¹⁷ **And I will make known your name to every generation: therefore the peoples shall give you praise for ever.**

Romans 7.14–25

¹⁴ We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. ²¹ So I find this law at work: although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Matthew 11.15–19, 25–30

¹⁵ Whoever has ears, let them hear. ¹⁶ 'To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the market-places and calling out to others : ¹⁷ "'We played the pipe for you , and you did not dance ; we sang a dirge , and you did not mourn.'" ¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon." ¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners." But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.'

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. ²⁷ 'All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸ 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'

Sermon

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers

Response Gracious God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. **For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3.16

Prayer of Approach [Let us pray.]

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies.

We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.

But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy.

Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Invitation to Confession

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table. Let us therefore draw near in full assurance of faith, and confess our sins to the God of grace.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.** The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn TIS 455 for all the saints who from their labours rest

OFFERTORY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.

Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Loving God, we thank you for this world of wonder and delight. You have given it to us to care for, so that all your creatures may enjoy its bounty. Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that when we turned away from you, you sent Jesus to live and work as one of us, and bring us back to you.

He showed us how to love you and set us free to love and serve one another.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that on the cross Jesus took away our sin, all that keeps us from each other and from you.

He frees us from hate and fear, from all that destroys love and trust.

Lord our God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

And so with everyone who believes in you, with all the saints and angels, we rejoice and praise you, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said, share his body and his blood. On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said, 'Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks. He shared the cup with them and said, 'This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory. Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread. The gifts of God for the people of God. Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

The body of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen

Prayer after Communion

Father of all

we give you thanks and praise that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.

May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.

Keep us in this hope that we have grasped: so we and all your people will be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name.

Hymn TIS 547 Be thou my vision

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Dismissal Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen**



Do you ever feel like a beast of burden, just doing each day what is obligatory, ploughing through the days and weeks, just because that is required? Life gets like that sometimes, with nothing to look forward to. The worst part of losing Phil is all those shared moments, having a cuppa together, laughing at a joke together or admiring something beautiful together that will never happen again. The Lord has been telling me recently to 'seek joy' so I have been trying, I've been making an effort to see my friends, spend time with my family, go out to dinner with my brother and accepting invitations.

Did you know that a yoke made perfectly for an animal so that it fits and is comfortable makes the work they do quite easy. A badly fitted yoke rubs and pulls on the wrong places and makes life much harder for the animal. In Jesus' day it was common to refer to servitude or obedience as a yoke and rabbis spoke of the yoke of the Torah. Servitude or obedience to a boss who is uncaring can often be like a badly fitted yoke and certainly obeying the law or Torah was a heavy burden that chafed and vexed the ordinary people, but Jesus said, 'my yoke is easy, and my burden is light'.



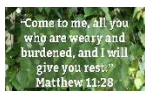
The religious leaders of Jesus' time were becoming more and more opposed to him and his work. On the one hand John the Baptist had led a life of self-denial. There had been rumours against him because they found it hard to take, including that a demon might have got into him. Then Jesus came celebrating the kingdom of heaven with all and sundry, having parties which spoke of God's lavish, generous love and forgiveness so people accused him of being a rebel, a son who didn't behave, even a false prophet.

Moses had warned the people against false prophets who would lead them away from following Yahweh, and there were strict rules about how to accuse a rebel son in Deuteronomy (21: 18-21) 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard'. They were not just being rude, they are accusing him of being a rebellious son and maybe, is the implication, therefore also a false prophet and worthy to be stoned.



People, especially those who see their status threatened don't like a challenge, neither someone who points them to a different sort of life, and lives more conscientiously than them, or of someone who shows God's love breaking into the world in new ways.

Jesus came in meekness, announcing the peaceable kingdom of unconditional love and forgiveness and celebrating the goodness of life for all, and he was rejected as not 'spiritual' enough. The authorities suggest that Jesus is a rebellious Israelite who should be executed in order to purge evil from the midst of the covenant community. They eventually succeed but not until it was God's time.



'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **Jesus** speaks as the embodiment of divine wisdom; Jesus invitation extends to all who are burdened. Unlike the heavy and uncomfortable burden that the Pharisees sought to put upon the people Jesus offered a different 'yoke' which, because it came from his mercy and love was easy to bear.

The way to train a young animal in a yoke is to put them with an older animal who will show them how to do it. When we bear Jesus' yoke, we are yoked with him, and he shows us how to carry the load. Jesus offers 'rest' which is not mere relaxation but includes: salvation, the kingdom of God, eternal life, unconditional love, and purpose. The welcome Jesus offers, is the welcome God offers through him. This is the invitation which lets us see who the Father really is and encourages us to come into his loving, welcoming presence.



Can following Jesus really be easy? Didn't he say that people had to be prepared to leave behind family, possessions, and their very lives? Yes, he did. But the ease and the joy, the rest and refreshment which he offers all spring from his own character. His gentleness and warmth are for all who turn to him, weighed down by moral, physical, emotional, financial, or whatever burdens. Jesus makes our own yoke for each of us personally and it fits so perfectly that we are happier in that yoke than we have ever been trying to find happiness for ourselves.

Some people think that going to a party is fun but next morning not so much. Some people live for their work but don't know how to live if they get made redundant or have to retire. Some people love hobbies or travel but what do you do with your stuff and all the photos? But talking to people God brings into your life brings joy and fulfillment. Working for God makes everything you do worthwhile, and you never have to retire, he just keeps changing the job description to fit you. And many people have found the joy of creation for God's kingdom or travelling for his purposes totally fulfilling.



Like 'rest' the 'easy yoke' of Jesus is not an invitation to a life of ease but of deliverance from the artificial burdens of human religion. There is work to be done but when we are walking yoked with Jesus, we do not notice the work. He shoulders the burden, and we just walk with him.

The passage closes with that invitation from the one who is himself meek and lowly, an invitation to all who know themselves to be burdened and in need of salvation or joy, an invitation to learn and become Jesus' disciples. Those who hear the invitation will answer the call, and when they do, they will praise God, who has given them this gift of revelation and they will welcome all who come looking for that revelation.